a comprehensive proposal for amendment in the existing lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which can be done only through an Act of Parliament in view of Articles 341(2) and 342(2) of the Constitution.

Decline in the profits of SAIL

420. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1486 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th August, 1987 and state:

(a) whether accounts of the SAIL for the year 1986-87 have been finalised; if so, whether its profits during the 1986-87 have come down substantially;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to improve viability of the Steel plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL earned a profit of Rs. 52.31 crores during the financial year 1986-87 as compared to Rs. 159 crores during 1985-86.

(b) The reduction in the profits during 1986-87 was mainly due to:—

(i) Increase in the prices of inputs particularly of coal, power, ferro-alloys and Railway freight.

(ii) Non-availability of adequate power.

(c) SAIL is making efforts to improve its profitability, *inter-alia*, by way of the following measures:—

(i) Increase total production and improve productivity;

(ii) Improve techno-economic parameters;

(iii) Reduce inventories and working capital;

(iv) Systematic improvement in maintenance of plant and equipment for better availability;

(v) Ensure adequate inputs and of the right quality;

(vi) Modernisation of the projects alongwith technological upgradation; and

(vii) Optimisation of captive power generation and energy conservation.

Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture

421. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture has also decided upon co-operation in arid zone agriculture and dryland farming, besides water management and evaluation of ground water resources; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement and the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement giving details of the Joint Communique signed at the end of 5th Meeting of Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture on 11th December, 1987 is enclosed. (*See* below). Concerned Departments/Organisations have been advised to